MARVEL COMICS
EYE OF THE PUMA CONCLUSION!
the SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN
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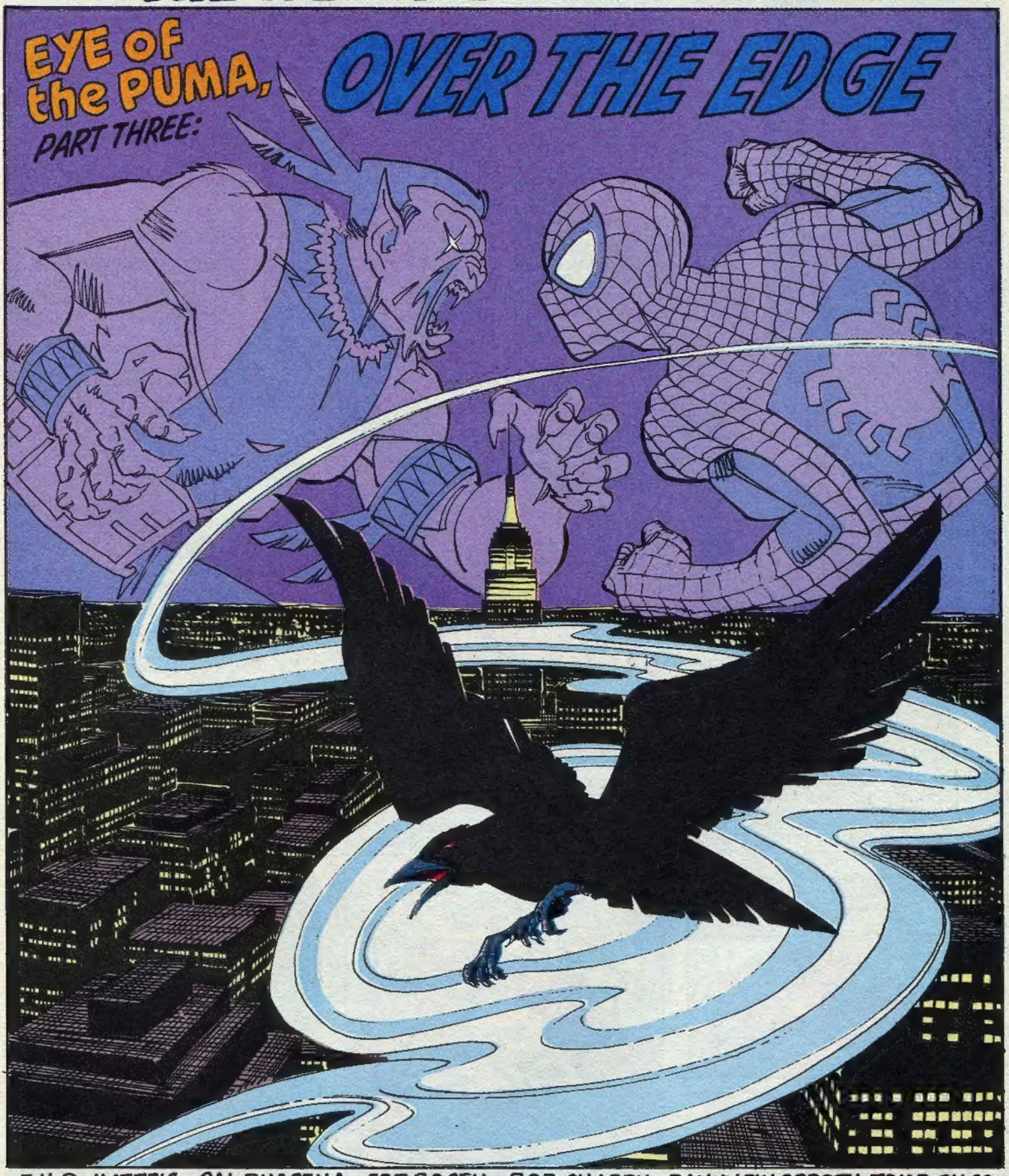
Sal Buscema
30TH ANNIVERSARY 1962 1992
THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN

BITTEN BY A RADIOACTIVE SPIDER, STUDENT PETER PARKER GAINED THE PROPORTIONATE STRENGTH AND AGILITY OF AN ARACHNID! ARMED WITH HIS WONDROUS WEB-SHOOTERS, THE RELUCTANT SUPER HERO STRUGGLES WITH SINISTER SUPER-VILLAINS, MAKING ENDS MEET, AND MAINTAINING SOME SEMBLANCE OF A NORMAL LIFE!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN!™

EYE of the PUMA, PART THREE: OVER THE EDGE



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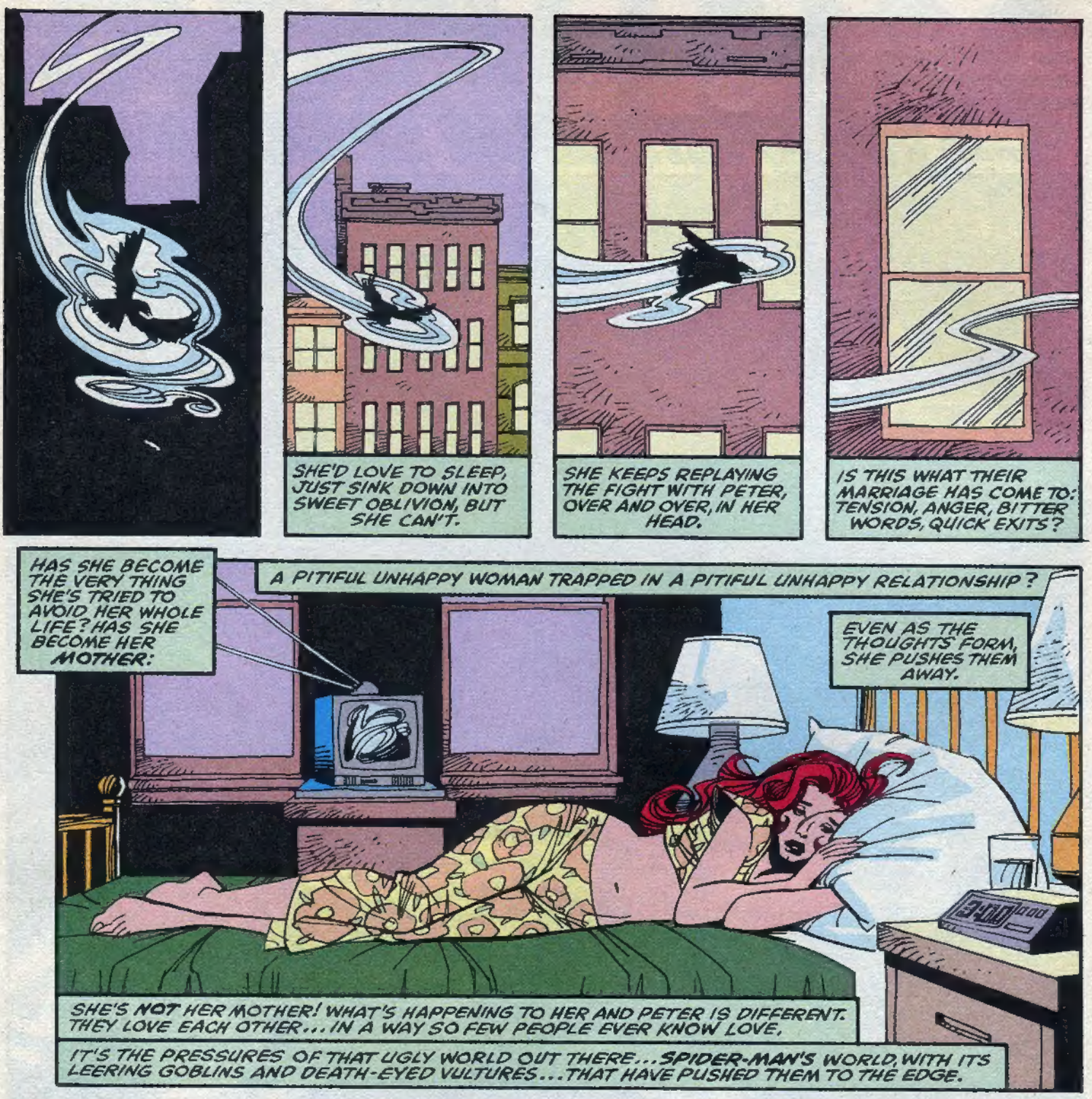
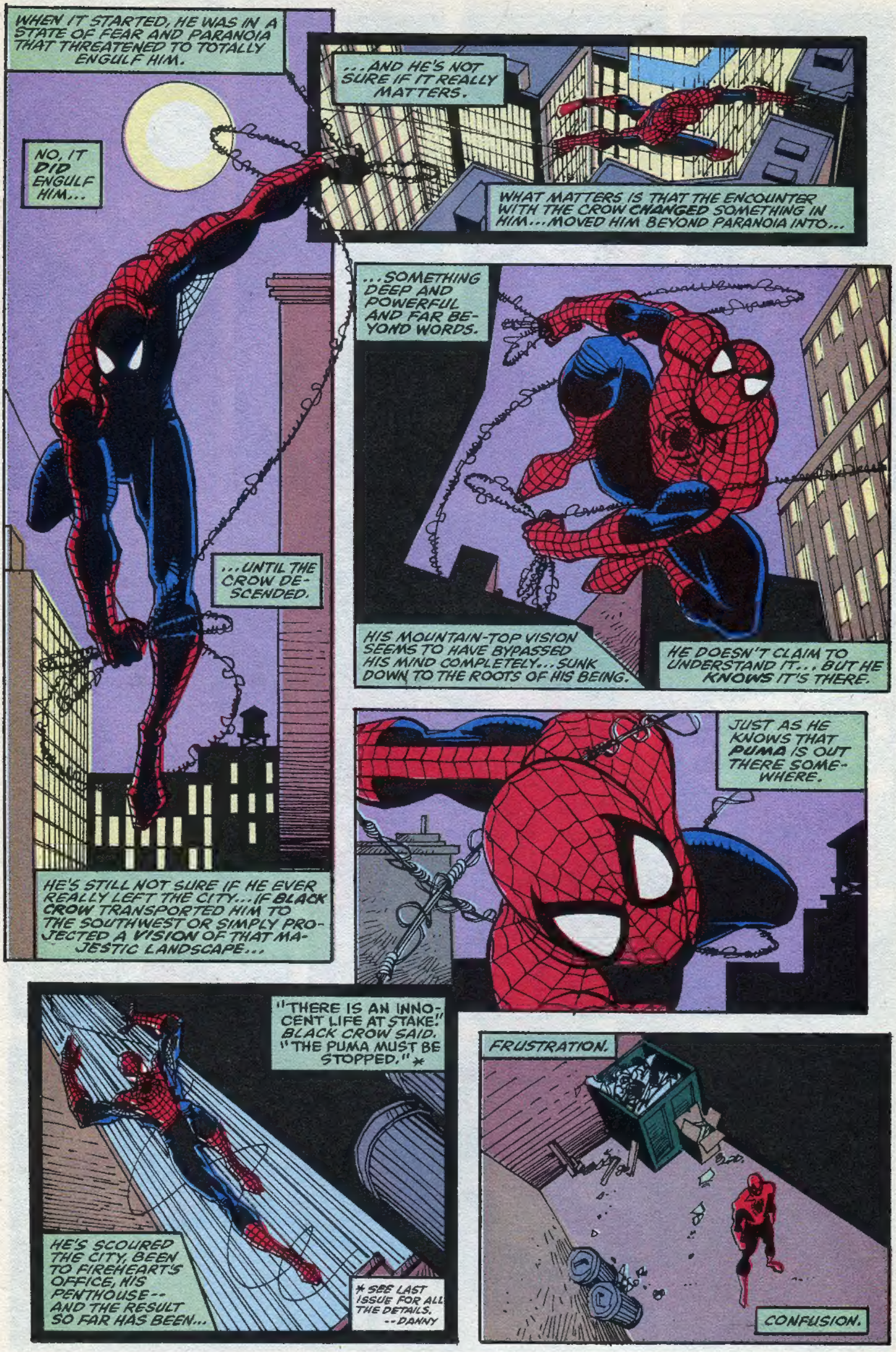
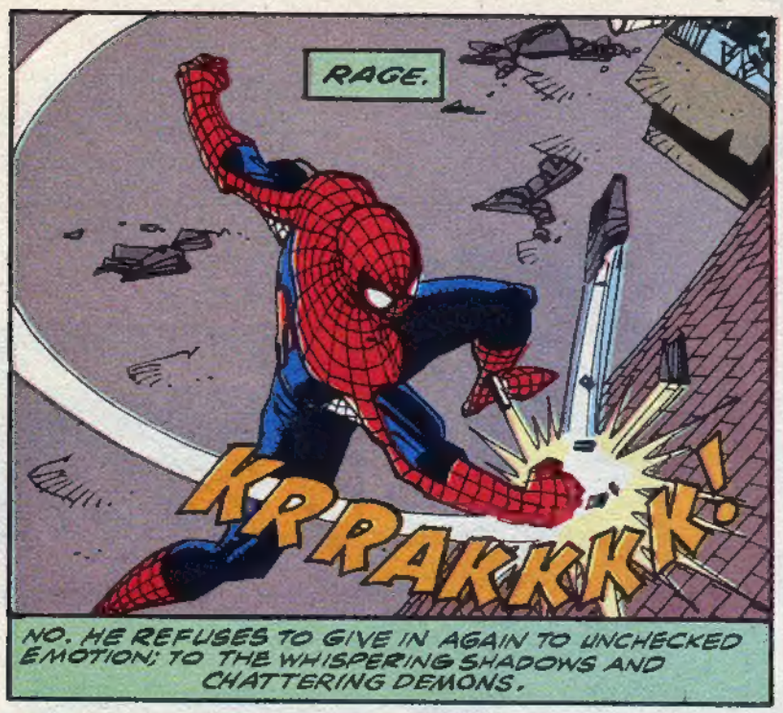
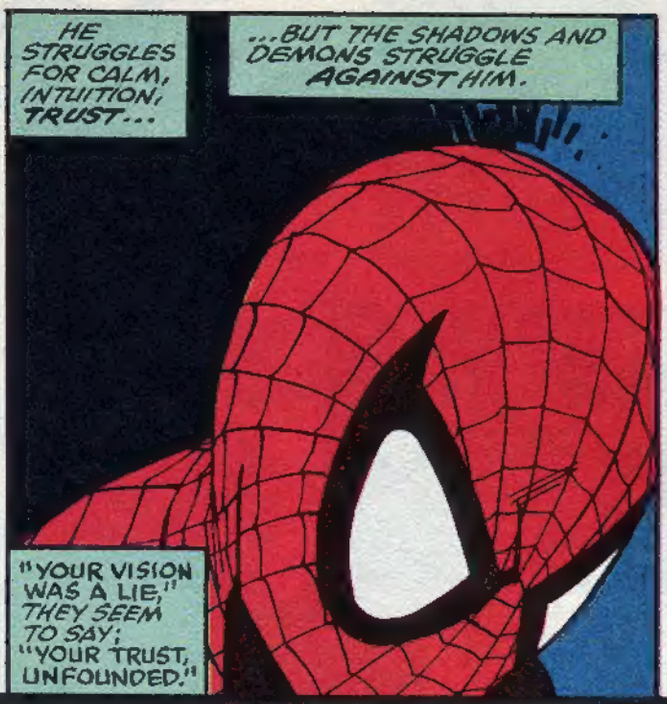

SHE'D LOVE TO SLEEP, JUST SINK DOWN INTO SWEET OBLIVION, BUT SHE CAN'T.
SHE KEEPS REPLAYING THE FIGHT WITH PETER, OVER AND OVER, IN HER HEAD.
IS THIS WHAT THEIR MARRIAGE HAS COME TO: TENSION, ANGER, BITTER WORDS, QUICK EXITS?
HAS SHE BECOME THE VERY THING SHE'S TRIED TO AVOID HER WHOLE LIFE? HAS SHE BECOME HER MOTHER:
A PITIFUL UNHAPPY WOMAN TRAPPED IN A PITIFUL UNHAPPY RELATIONSHIP?
EVEN AS THE THOUGHTS FORM, SHE PUSHES THEM AWAY.
SHE'S NOT HER MOTHER! WHAT'S HAPPENING TO HER AND PETER IS DIFFERENT. THEY LOVE EACH OTHER... IN A WAY SO FEW PEOPLE EVER KNOW LOVE.
IT'S THE PRESSURES OF THAT UGLY WORLD OUT THERE... SPIDER-MAN'S WORLD, WITH ITS LEERING GOBLINS AND DEATH-EYED VULTURES... THAT HAVE PUSHED THEM TO THE EDGE.
TO THE EDGE, SHE THINKS, BUT NOT OVER IT. OUR LOVE'S TOO STRONG FOR THAT. TOO SOLID.
I...
KREEEEK
...HOPE...?
PETER...?

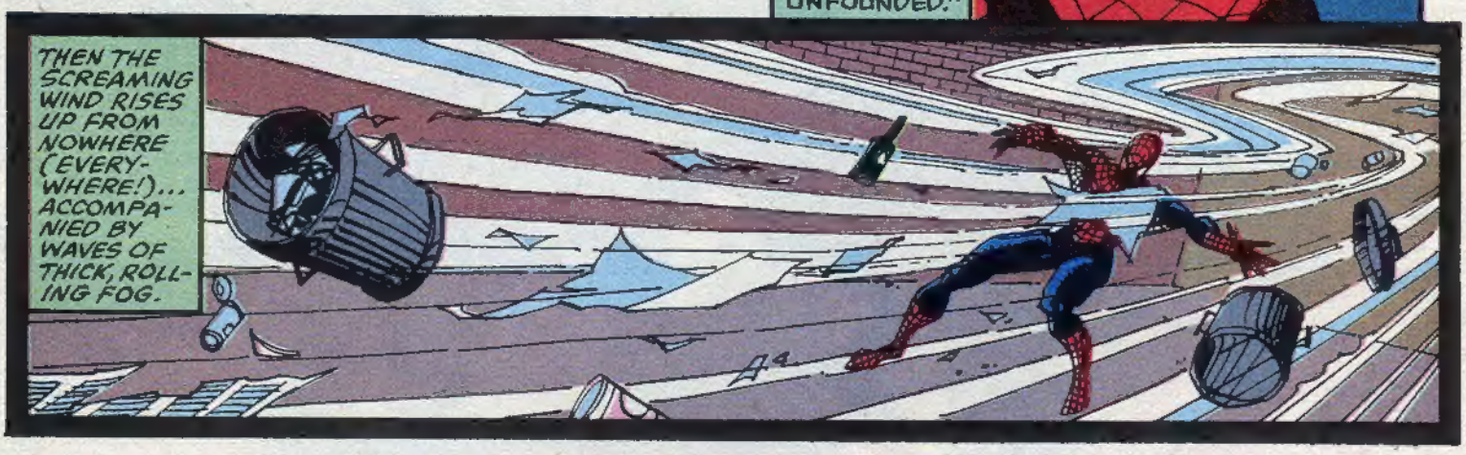
PETER, IS THAT--?
Mary Jane,
I'm so sorry for the way I acted tonight. I love you more than words can say.
Be back ASAP
Peter
SAFE, ON SOLID GROUND, AS LONG AS THEY LOVE EACH OTHER.
THEY'RE SAFE.
IT'S BEEN QUITE A NIGHT.

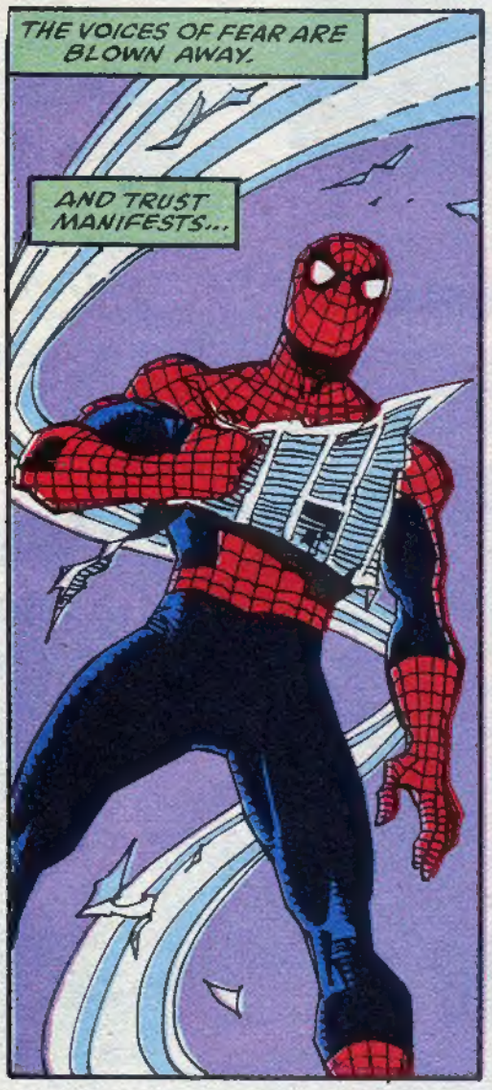

WHEN IT STARTED, HE WAS IN A STATE OF FEAR AND PARANOIA THAT THREATENED TO TOTALLY ENGULF HIM.
NO, IT DID ENGULF HIM...
...UNTIL THE CROW DESCENDED.
HE'S STILL NOT SURE IF HE EVER REALLY LEFT THE CITY... IF BLACK CROW TRANSPORTED HIM TO THE SOUTHWEST OR SIMPLY PROJECTED A VISION OF THAT MAJESTIC LANDSCAPE...
...AND HE'S NOT SURE IF IT REALLY MATTERS.
WHAT MATTERS IS THAT THE ENCOUNTER WITH THE CROW CHANGED SOMETHING IN HIM... MOVED HIM BEYOND PARANOIA INTO...
...SOMETHING DEEP AND POWERFUL AND FAR BEYOND WORDS.
HIS MOUNTAIN-TOP VISION SEEMS TO HAVE BYPASSED HIS MIND COMPLETELY... SUNK DOWN TO THE ROOTS OF HIS BEING.
HE DOESN'T CLAIM TO UNDERSTAND IT... BUT HE KNOWS IT'S THERE.
JUST AS HE KNOWS THAT PUMA IS OUT THERE SOMEWHERE.
"THERE IS AN INNOCENT LIFE AT STAKE!" BLACK CROW SAID. "THE PUMA MUST BE STOPPED."*
HE'S SCOURED THE CITY, BEEN TO FIREHEART'S OFFICE, HIS PENTHOUSE-- AND THE RESULT SO FAR HAS BEEN...
* SEE LAST ISSUE FOR ALL THE DETAILS. --DANNY
FRUSTRATION.
CONFUSION.

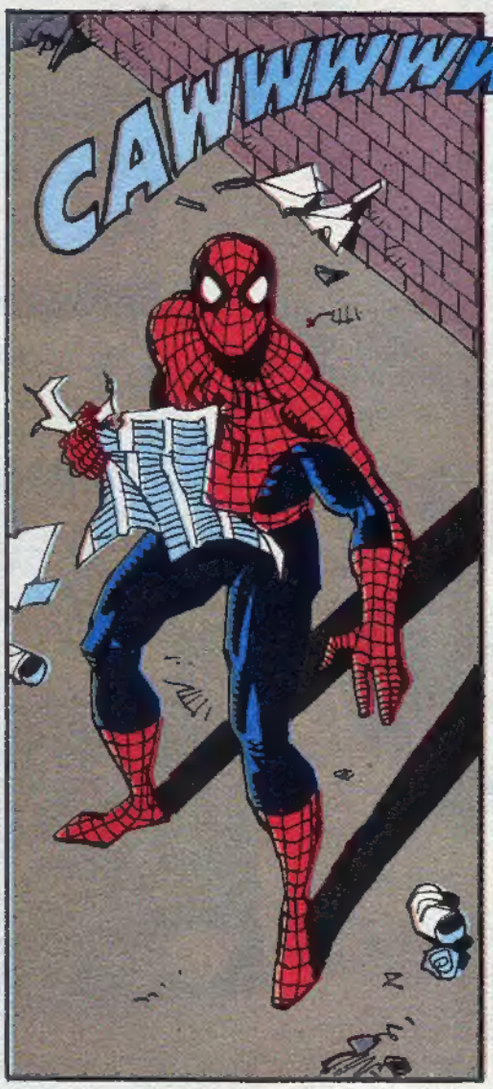


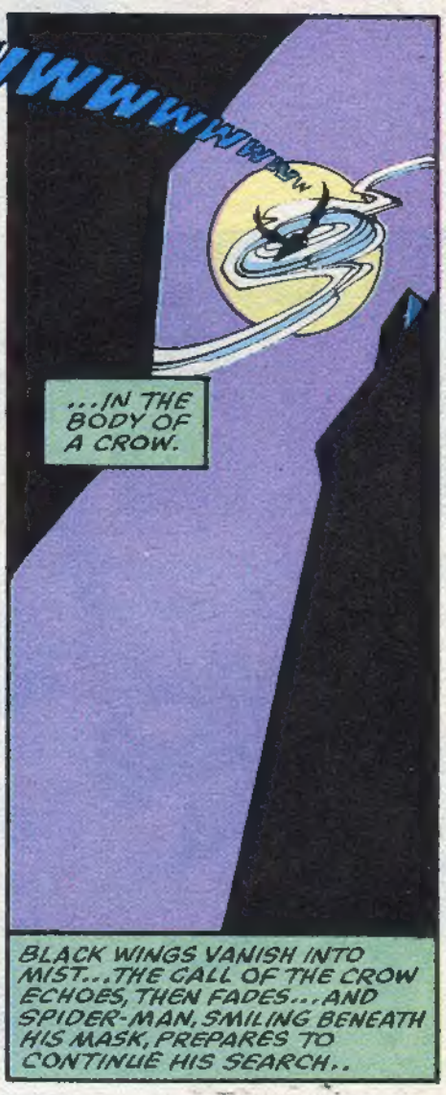
NO. HE REFUSES TO GIVE IN AGAIN TO UNCHECKED EMOTION: TO THE WHISPERING SHADOWS AND CHATTERING DEMONS.

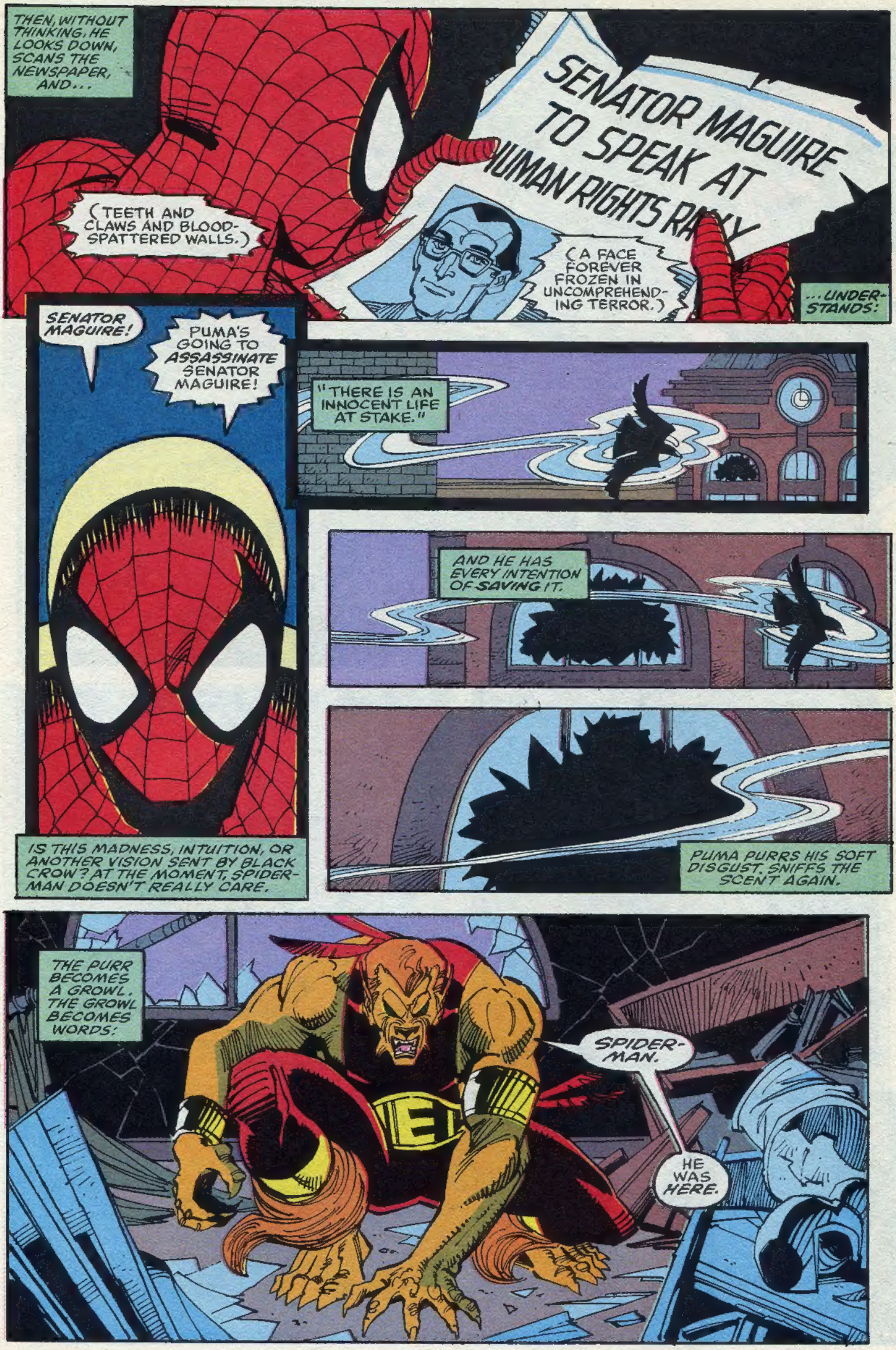

HE STRUGGLES FOR CALM, INTUITION, TRUST...
...BUT THE SHADOWS AND DEMONS STRUGGLE AGAINST HIM.
"YOUR VISION WAS A LIE," THEY SEEM TO SAY; "YOUR TRUST, UNFOUNDED."



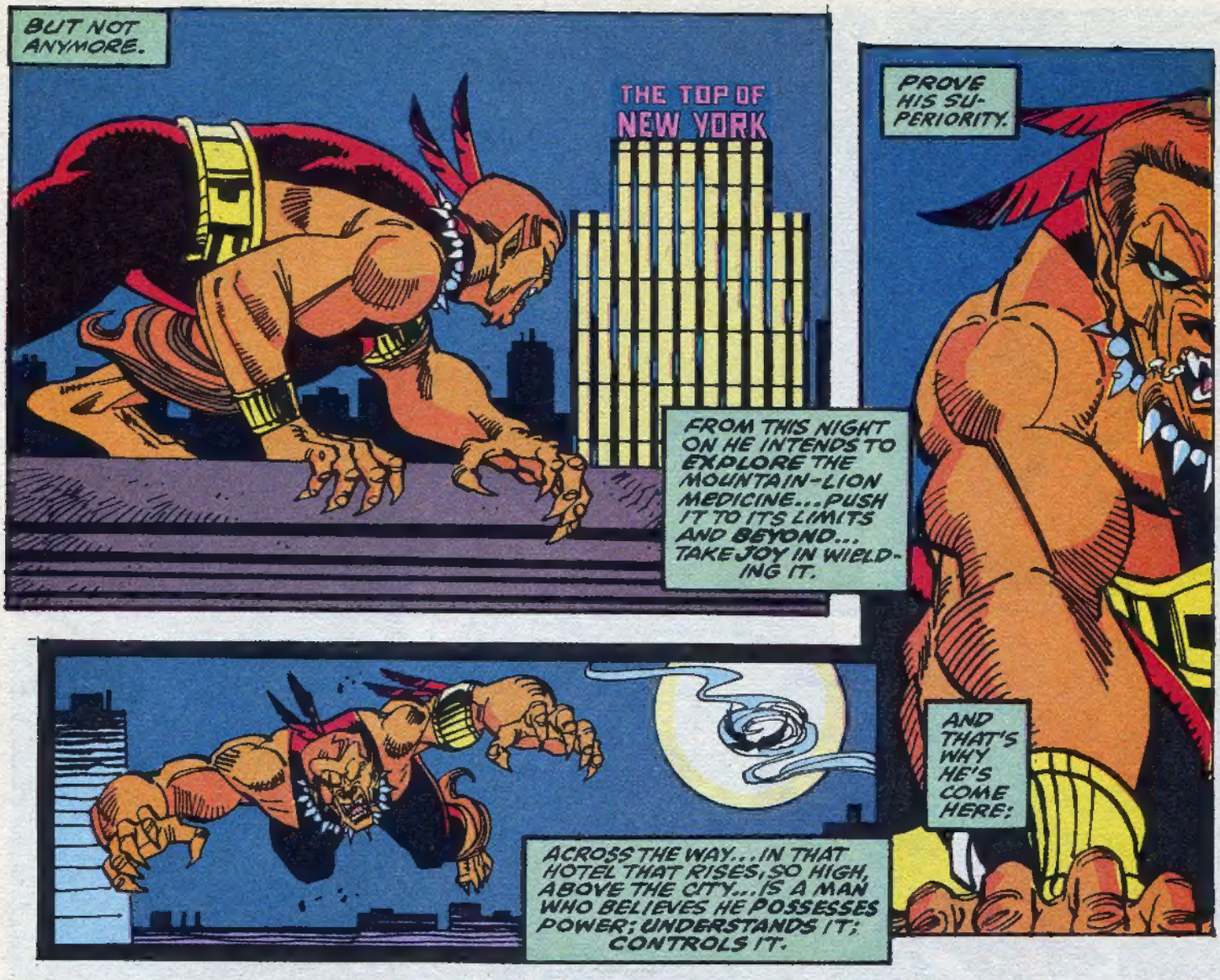





...IN THE BODY OF A CROW.
BLACK WINGS VANISH INTO MIST...THE CALL OF THE CROW ECHOES, THEN FADES...AND SPIDER-MAN, SMILING BENEATH HIS MASK, PREPARES TO CONTINUE HIS SEARCH..

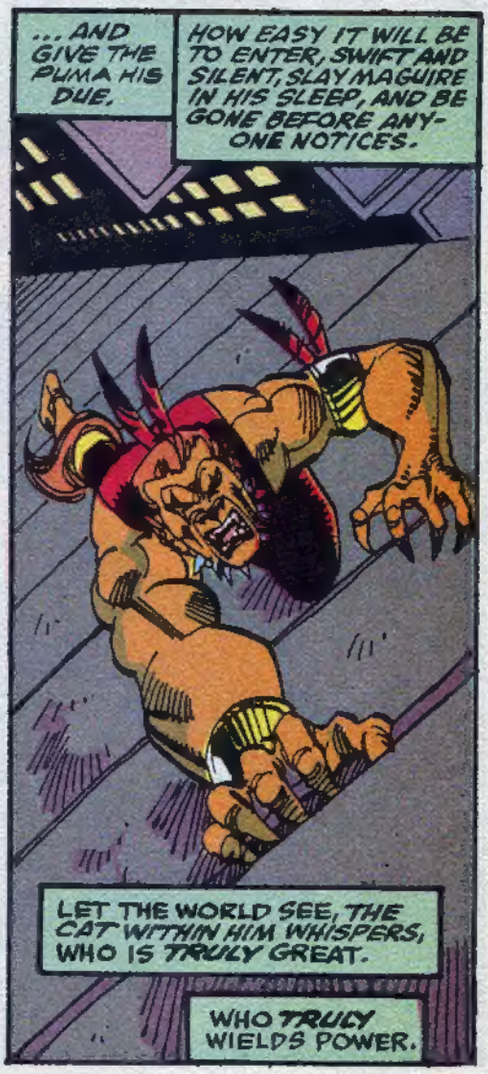

THEN, WITHOUT THINKING, HE LOOKS DOWN, SCANS THE NEWSPAPER, AND...
SENATOR MAGUIRE TO SPEAK AT
(TEETH AND CLAWS AND BLOOD-SPATTERED WALLS.)
(A FACE FOREVER FROZEN IN UNCOMPREHENDING TERROR.)
...UNDERSTANDS:
SENATOR MAGUIRE!
PUMA'S GOING TO ASSASSINATE SENATOR MAGUIRE!
"THERE IS AN INNOCENT LIFE AT STAKE."
AND HE HAS EVERY INTENTION OF SAVING IT.
IS THIS MADNESS, INTUITION, OR ANOTHER VISION SENT BY BLACK CROW? AT THE MOMENT, SPIDER-MAN DOESN'T REALLY CARE.
PUMA PURRS HIS SOFT DISGUST, SNIFFS THE SCENT AGAIN.
THE PURR BECOMES A GROWL, THE GROWL BECOMES WORDS:
SPIDER-MAN.
HE WAS HERE.

PUMA ROARS--DISGUSTED AND ANGRY.
HE HAS NO LOVE FOR PARKER, NO HATE. JUST A GRUDGING RESPECT FOR THE POWER HE WIELDS.
BUT TONIGHT, FIREHEART THINKS, I'VE TAKEN THE FULL UNFETTERED POWER OF THE PUMA IN MY HANDS.
I'VE DEFEATED THE CROW...SET THE CAT-MEDICINE WITHIN ME FREE.
TONIGHT, WHEN I CLIMBED THAT MOUNTAIN. I CLIMBED ABOVE SPIDER-MAN..., ABOVE THE CONSTRAINTS OF HUMAN DESTINY.
EVERYWHERE HE TURNS, SPIDER-MAN IS THERE. THEIR DESTINIES INTERTWINED, AS BLACK CROW SAID; THREADS IN A COMPLEX WEB.
TONIGHT I HAVE BECOME A LAW UNTO MYSELF.
THE LAW OF POWER.
PUMA'S LAW.
ALL THESE YEARS, DOING THE WILL OF THE TRIBE. THEIR SAVIOR, THEY CALLED HIM. THEIR SERVANT WAS MORE LIKE IT.
A BEAST OF BURDEN. BACK BREAKING UNDER THE WEIGHT OF THEIR CONTROL. AND EVERY TIME HE TRIED TO BREAK FREE..., TO ASSERT HIS OWN IDENTITY... THEY CONDEMNED HIM.
ALL HIS LIFE, FIREHEART ACCEPTED THEIR CONDEMNATION. HE SURRENDERED TO GUILT AND REMORSE.


BUT NOT ANYMORE.
THE TOP OF NEW YORK
FROM THIS NIGHT ON HE INTENDS TO EXPLORE THE MOUNTAIN-LION MEDICINE... PUSH IT TO ITS LIMITS AND BEYOND... TAKE JOY IN WIELDING IT.
PROVE HIS SUPERIORITY.
AND THAT'S WHY HE'S COME HERE:
ACROSS THE WAY... IN THAT HOTEL THAT RISES, SO HIGH, ABOVE THE CITY... IS A MAN WHO BELIEVES HE POSSESSES POWER; UNDERSTANDS IT; CONTROLS IT.

SENATOR MAGUIRE COMMANDS MUCH RESPECT IN THE WHITE MAN'S WORLD.
IT'S SAID THAT, A FEW YEARS FROM NOW, HE COULD BE SITTING IN THE WHITE HOUSE...
...COMMANDING THIS ENTIRE NATION.
DECIDING THE FATE OF THE WORLD.

BUT THIS "GREAT" MAN, PUMA THINKS, WITH A DERISIVE SNARL, IS NOTHING BEFORE MY POWER.
THE SENATOR'S ENEMIES HAVE OFFERED FIRE-HEART TWO MILLION DOLLARS TO ASSASSINATE MAGUIRE.
HE DOESN'T WANT THEIR MONEY.
WHAT HE WANTS IS A CHANCE TO BREAK FREE, ONCE AND FOR ALL, OF THE CHAINS THAT HAVE HELD HIM. TO THROW OFF THE YOKE OF THE TRIBE... OF ENFORCED RESPONSIBILITY...


...AND GIVE THE PUMA HIS DUE.
HOW EASY IT WILL BE TO ENTER, SWIFT AND SILENT, SLAY MAGUIRE IN HIS SLEEP, AND BE GONE BEFORE ANYONE NOTICES.
LET THE WORLD SEE, THE CAT WITHIN HIM WHISPERS, WHO IS TRULY GREAT.
WHO TRULY WIELDS POWER.

"LET THE WORLD SEE"?
BUT HOW WILL THEY SEE, HE SUDDENLY REALIZES, IF HE SLIPS IN LIKE A THIEF IN THE NIGHT AND VANISHES WITHOUT A TRACE?
NO, HE DECIDES; THE TIME FOR SNEAKING WITH SHADOWS IS PAST. THE TIME FOR GUILT AND SHAME...
...IS OVER.
KRASH

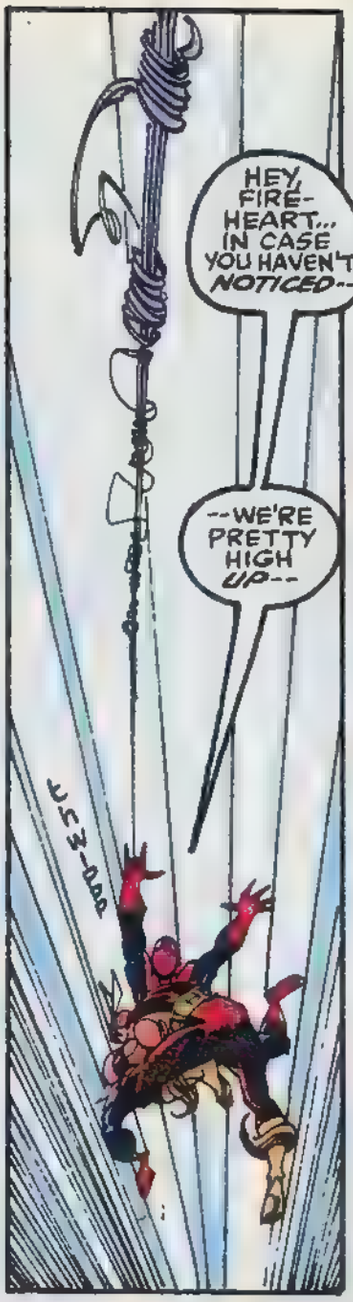
HE THINKS OF THE MEN HE'S KILLED IN THE PAST:
MOBSTERS, DRUG-DEALERS, HUMAN SCUM WHO'D LIVED LIVES FAR BLOODIER THAN MINE.
WHO... WHO ARE YOU?!
HE USED TO TELL HIMSELF THAT IT WASN'T REALLY KILLING TO MURDER A MURDERER. PERHAPS IT WAS A RATIONALIZATION. PERHAPS NOT.
BUT NOW HE HAS COME TO SLAY A MAN MANY REVERE FOR HIS COMMITMENT TO MORAL PRECEPTS AND HUMAN RIGHTS.
HE SEES THE TERROR IN MAGUIRE'S EYES AND, FOR AN INSTANT, FEELS AN URGE TO TURN AND RUN, TO KNEEL BEFORE FATHER SKY AND BEG FORGIVENESS.
THEN HE LAUGHS.
I NEED NO FORGIVENESS, HE THINKS, GRINNING; FOR I'VE COMMITTED NO SINS.
I'M BEYOND SIN; BEYOND REDEMPTION.
I AM YOUR DEATH.
THINK AGAIN--!
NOW BACK AWAY FROM HIM... NICE 'N' SLOW--
--OR WE'LL BLOW YOU FROM HERE T'HOBOKEN.
HE LAUGHS AGAIN:
SOFT AND COLD AND DANGEROUS.

HE MOVES.
ARRRR!!
KER-AKK
THW
OOM!
GRRRR
KLIK
ROWWWRRR
SHH
RKTT
AIEEE!!
I'LL LET YOU THREE LIVE... BROKEN OF BODY, BROKEN OF WILL... SO THAT YOU CAN REMEMBER THIS NIGHT WITH FEAR...
-- SO THAT OTHERS WILL KNOW AND ALSO FEAR --
-- THE PUMA'S POWER.

BUT YOU--
--LOOK AT YOU!
NO... PLEASE... PLEASE, IF YOU HAVE ANY DECENCY...
...I BEG YOU... DON'T KILL ME!
THE "GREAT" MAN WHO ASPIRES TO RULE A NATION,
...PLEASE...
AND YOU CAN'T EVEN RULE YOURSELF.
THWIP
SEEMS T'ME, FIREHEART--
--THAT YOU'RE THE ONE WITH THE SELF-CONTROL PROBLEM.
BI W
AAMM!

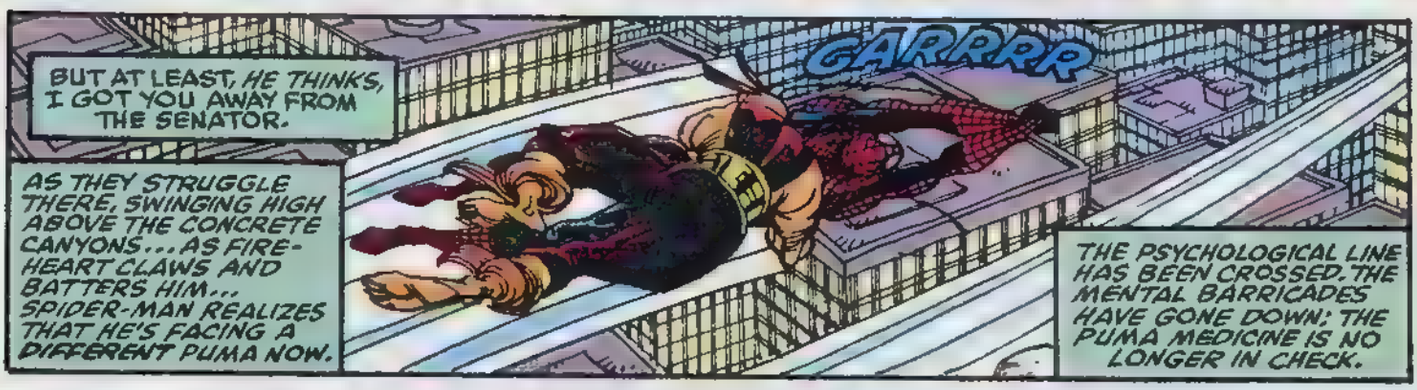
SPIDER-MAN... I'M WARNING YOU-- DON'T GET IN MY WAY.
TOO LATE--
--I'M ALREADY THERE!
KRAK
KOOM!
GROWWRRROARR!

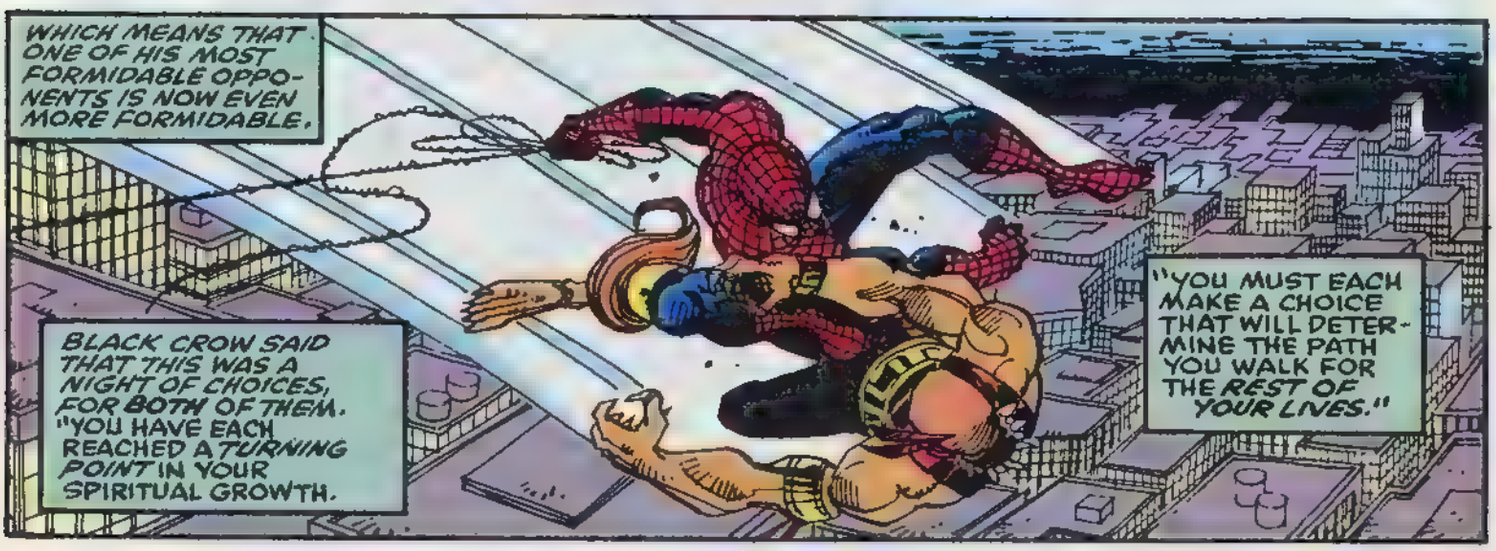
SH
A
K
K-K-K!

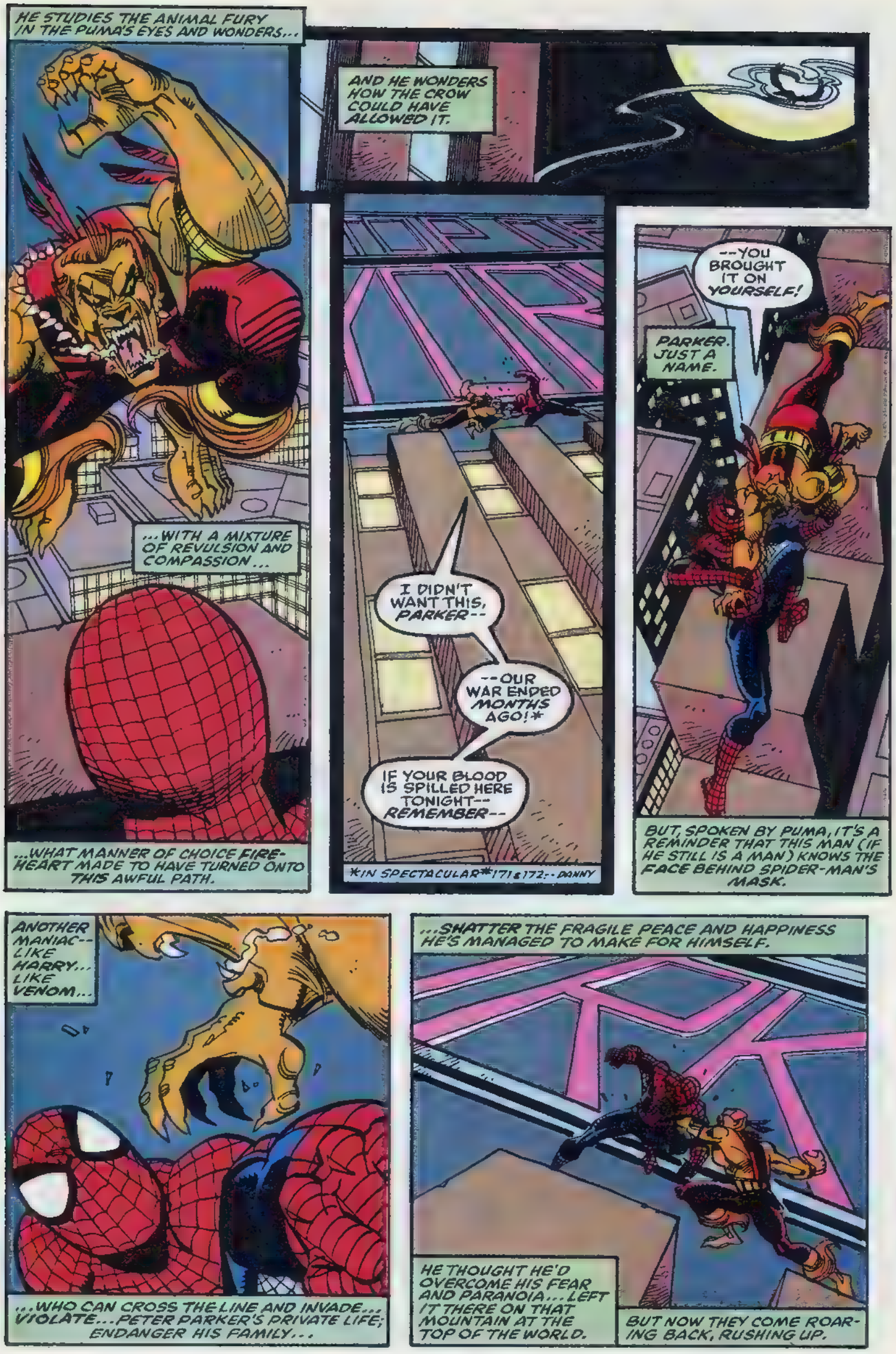

HEY, FIRE-HEART... IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T NOTICED--
--WE'RE PRETTY HIGH UP--

--AND THE LAST TIME I LOOKED--

--NEITHER ONE OF US HAD WINGS!


BUT AT LEAST, HE THINKS, I GOT YOU AWAY FROM THE SENATOR.
AS THEY STRUGGLE THERE, SWINGING HIGH ABOVE THE CONCRETE CANYONS... AS FIRE-HEART CLAWS AND BATTERS HIM... SPIDER-MAN REALIZES THAT HE'S FACING A DIFFERENT PUMA NOW.
GARRRR
THE PSYCHOLOGICAL LINE HAS BEEN CROSSED. THE MENTAL BARRICADES HAVE GONE DOWN: THE PUMA MEDICINE IS NO LONGER IN CHECK.


WHICH MEANS THAT ONE OF HIS MOST FORMIDABLE OPPONENTS IS NOW EVEN MORE FORMIDABLE.
BLACK CROW SAID THAT THIS WAS A NIGHT OF CHOICES, FOR BOTH OF THEM. "YOU HAVE EACH REACHED A TURNING POINT IN YOUR SPIRITUAL GROWTH.
"YOU MUST EACH MAKE A CHOICE THAT WILL DETERMINE THE PATH YOU WALK FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIVES."


HE STUDIES THE ANIMAL FURY IN THE PUMA'S EYES AND WONDERS...
...WITH A MIXTURE OF REVULSION AND COMPASSION...
...WHAT MANNER OF CHOICE FIRE-HEART MADE TO HAVE TURNED ONTO THIS AWFUL PATH.
AND HE WONDERS HOW THE CROW COULD HAVE ALLOWED IT.
I DIDN'T WANT THIS, PARKER--
--OUR WAR ENDED MONTHS AGO!*
IF YOUR BLOOD IS SPILLED HERE TONIGHT-- REMEMBER--
IN SPECTACULAR 171 & 172:- DANNY
--YOU BROUGHT IT ON YOURSELF!
PARKER. JUST A NAME.
BUT, SPOKEN BY PUMA, IT'S A REMINDER THAT THIS MAN (IF HE STILL IS A MAN) KNOWS THE FACE BEHIND SPIDER-MAN'S MASK.
ANOTHER MANIAC-- LIKE HARRY... LIKE VENOM...
...WHO CAN CROSS THE LINE AND INVADE... VIOLATE... PETER PARKER'S PRIVATE LIFE; ENDANGER HIS FAMILY...
...SHATTER THE FRAGILE PEACE AND HAPPINESS HE'S MANAGED TO MAKE FOR HIMSELF.
HE THOUGHT HE'D OVERCOME HIS FEAR AND PARANOIA... LEFT IT THERE ON THAT MOUNTAIN AT THE TOP OF THE WORLD.
BUT NOW THEY COME ROARING BACK, RUSHING UP.

OVER-WHELM-ING HIM.
WHOOOM!
NO!
KT HO
NO!
SHHHHHHH-FRAAKKK
NO ONE ELSE IS GOING TO HURT MY FAMILY!
NO ONE ELSE IS GOING TO PUT US THROUGH MORE PAIN!

BULLPEN BULLETINS

MARVEL COMICS

STAN'S SOAPBOX

Hi, Heroes!

It's time to correct a mistaken notion! We often get letters from loyal Marvelites gloating over the fact that some of our books may be outselling the competition, and wishing us well in our mission to conquer the comicbook world by defeating our rivals!

And therein lies the mistake! The last thing we want to do is conquer anything or defeat anyone. Sure, we have competitors, but just between us, most of them are friends of ours. I'm sure you've noticed that many artists and writers may work for a while at Marvel and then you see their strips appearing in other publisher's magazines. And, of course you've noticed the same in reverse. You'll see names listed on our credits pages that used to be associated with other companies. It's normal. It's natural. It's the way the comicbook field works.

Working as an artist or writer in comics is not indentured slavery. These gifted guys and gals are free to work wherever and for whomever they wish. Naturally, we'd like 'em all to favor our own blushin' bullpen, and the way we try to accomplish that is by holding out a permanent welcome mat for the best and most exciting stories, characters and concepts that the greatest talents in comics can bring us!

The point is, Marvel's only job is to provide the wildest, wittiest and most wondrous tales of fantasy and adventure that we can create. And, let's face it, that's what the other guys are trying to do, too. The more we compete and try to out-shine each other, the more you, the reader, benefit.

That's why we truly wish our competitors the best of luck. The better they get, the better we have to be. That's what competition is all about; that's what keeps each of us on our toes. We're all, them and us, a bunch of foolhardy fanatics who love comics as much as you do and we're out there proving it with every page we create!

So here's to every hard-working hero at every comicbook company throughout the land! Let's never stop trying to top each other; we owe it to the most important gang of all — our readers!

Excelsior!

Stan

Stan Lee

*"Dog bites man — that's not a story. Man bites dog — **that's** a story. And if the dog and the man slug it out for six issues, and then Wolverine shows up for a guest appearance, and the dog turns out to be a mutant, that's a **Marvel** story!"*

— Marvel Editorial Handbook

As we enter the dog days of summer, we come to wonder why dogs get such a bad rap. After all, a dog's day consists of nothing but eating and sleeping, and that sounds pretty good to us. Actually it's not that different from the way editor in chief **Tom DeFalco** spends his day, come to think of it. But why does it have to be "dog days"?

It could just as easily be "cat," or "monkey," or "squirrel" days. After all, the life of every animal is basically the same, unless that animal is one of those pampered poodles living in one of those high-rise apartments on the upper east side with some rich society type. We've been having our share of dog-day afternoons here at Marvel, as the entire editorial offices of Marvel are moving temporarily from the ninth and tenth floors down to the fourth floor of good ol' 387 Park Avenue South. We've got our ace construction crew hard at work, knocking down more walls than during a Thing/Hulk clash. (Wasn't that one of our books in the seventies — *Ace Builder and His Construction Crew*? Came out around the same time as *Devil Dinosaur*.)

When they're done, the Marvel offices will look neat, clean, and professional. If only we could say the same for the editors! Now that Marvel is a publicly owned company, we felt it was time for a change. We were hoping to get the Bullpen to look as much like the deck of the Starship Enterprise as possible, but that plan didn't work out! So we decided to settle for the look of a typical dentist's office instead. Our feeling is that the neater and more professional our offices look, the better our comics will be! To that end, we've also instituted a new dress code, requiring all Marvel staffers to keep their footwear on for the length of the entire workday! Gotta keep them doggies covered!

The Marvel softball team, the Punishers, certainly has not gone to the dogs. The team started off the season more powerfully than a locomotive, winning the first DC/Marvel game 22-8. **Rob Tokar**'s pinch assistant editor **Joe Andreani** played like a man of steel, until an injury took him out of the game. **Mike Rockwitz** was able to round four bases in a single bound, scoring five RBI's, and Assistant Editor **Mark Powers** was faster than a speeding (DC) Bullet. Considering the outcome of the game, maybe the Marvel team should change its name to Kryptonite! (Funny, we would've thought the DC team would have been better with bats ...) Two more DC/Marvel softball crossovers remain to be played.

BOY! THE MOVE SURE WENT QUICK!
YEAH! ESPECIALLY SINCE WE HAD LOCKJAW TELEPORT ALL OUR STUFF FOR US!
HOT POSTERS (BLUEPRINTS) Property of Dept.
HOT CALEN. ARS
ERNIE CHAN ART
by Barry Dutter and Rick Parker

But softball isn't the only sport of choice here at Marvel. Four Marveloids recently escaped from the doghouse to go backstage at a pro wrestling match held by the World Championship Wrestling league! In attendance were the entire creative team of our WCW wrestling comic — writer **Mike Lackey**, penciler **Ron Wilson**, and inker **Don Hudson** — as well as Bullpenner **Dave Sharpe**. The event took place at Madison Square Garden, where the Marvel Manglers got to meet such wrestling superstars as **Sting**, **Cactus Jack**, and **Johnny B. Bad**! (Where do they get those outrageous names?)

Writer Mike did not have his dream come true of being hit over the head with a steel chair by the WCW champ, but, as he puts it, "I did get strangled by **Paul E. Dangerously**!" This incident doesn't seem to have had any effect on Mike's writing, unfortunately! Mike and Don went on from there to appear on **Joe Argondezzi**'s Manhattan radio show, "Pro Wrestling Spotlight" on station WEVD. Our wrestling crew certainly deserves the championship belt of promotion! They might not have the best-selling comic but when it comes to promotion, they're all winners!

Well, we've reached the end of another Bullpen Bulletins page, and we're dog-tired. It's time to put aside this dog-eared comic book, and lay another Bullpen page to rest. It's been a hard day's night, and we've been working like ... cats? Nah, we don't like it either.

Guess we're just barking up the wrong tree.

EMPTY CALORIES PUSHING THE ENVELOPE LITERARY ALLUSIONS STOCK FOOTAGE SEQUELS ENDING IN -G MATHEMATICAL MINEFIELDS NUMBERS TOPICAL OTTMENTS THE INVISIBLE CHOIR LEFT-HANDED LEGISLATION PUNCH LINES THE CUTTING EDGE REALITY CHECKS CASSINI DIVISION LOVE SEATS WEAKLY INTERACTING MASSIVE PARTICLES EVIL DOPPELGANGERS PREACHING TO THE CONVERTED PIANO

SUGAR SELF-HELP ASIMOV BLUE ICE WETWARE BULLPEN ERLINE BLATHER PLATE TECTONICS SIGNIFICANT OTHERS MORALITY

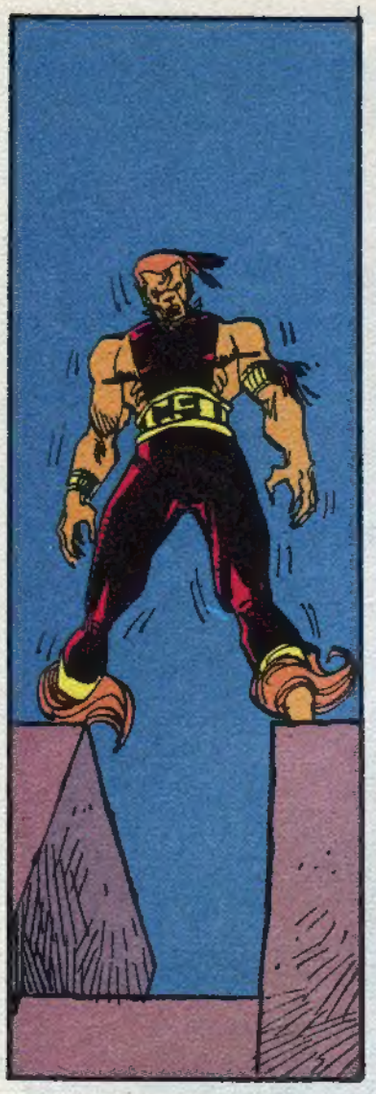
THE CROW
...AND HE REMEMBERS.
A SHIMMERING WEB. A UNIVERSE OF TRUST. A VISION.
THE CROW CALLS TO HIM...
HE CHOOSES.
HE WILL NOT BETRAY THAT VISION... REFUSES TO BETRAY HIMSELF, NO MATTER THE PAIN, NO MATTER THE COST.
BUT WHAT DO I DO NOW? HE WONDERS. PUMA'S COMING TO. HE'S NOT GOING TO STOP THIS TILL ONE OF US IS DEAD.
INSTINCTIVELY HE LOOKS UP, AT THE CIRCLING CROW.
Are you willing to risk your life for your Vision? IT SEEMS TO ASK.
Or is trust just for the mountaintop...
...and not the world below?
PUMA STIRS... FOCUSES ANGRY EYES...
...AND PETER PARKER KNOWS WHAT HE HAS TO DO.

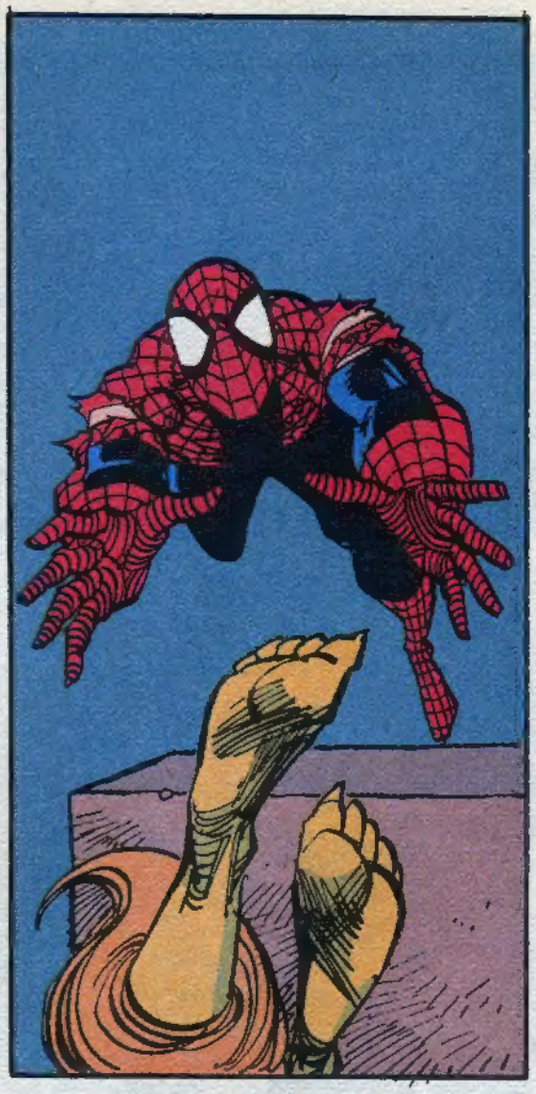
I'M NOT GOING TO FIGHT YOU, FIREHEART. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
I WON'T PLAY THIS GAME BY THE BEAST'S RULES.
IF YOU WANT TO SHOW THE WORLD HOW GLORIOUS, HOW POWERFUL YOU ARE--
--YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO DO IT SOME OTHER WAY.
NO--
--THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY!
PUMA'S WAY!!
SHHHRAKKK
SO YOU'D BETTER DEFEND YOURSELF, PARKER--
--BEFORE I RIP YOUR HEART--
SHHAKKK
--RIGHT OUT OF--
RRAKKK
--YOUR CHEST!
SLASSSHH!

NO POINT... IS THERE?
THIS IS A POWER-TRIP FOR YOU, AND YOU CAN'T PROVE HOW POWERFUL YOU ARE... IF I DON'T BRING MY POWER... TO BEAR AGAINST YOU--!
HE'S RIGHT, THE FURIOUS PUMA THINKS. I'VE BEEN CHEATED.
OUT OF THE SENATOR'S DEATH. OUT OF AN OPPORTUNITY TO PROVE MYSELF SPIDER-MAN'S MASTER.
CURSE YOU, SPIDER-MAN! CURSE--
SKRAWW
FIKKK
YOU!
I..I KNEW... SOMETHING ABOUT YOU! A-ANOTHER FACE? ANOTHER NAME?
I KNEW... SOMETHING--
BUT IT'S GONE.

A gift from the Great Spirit--in return for your courage--
--and your trust.
THANKS.
THAT'S ONE PROBLEM DOWN, HE THINKS. BUT I'M STILL NOT SURE WHAT TO DO ABOUT...
GRROWHR
PUMA: HE CROUCHES THERE, DAZED AND HUMILIATED. UNSURE WHAT TO DO, WHERE TO GO.
MINUTES AGO, HE THOUGHT HIMSELF ABOVE THE LAW. AND NOW...
...THE LAW HAS RETURNED--TO PUT THE YOKE BACK ON HIM.
TO MAKE HIM A BEAST OF BURDEN ONCE MORE.

NEVER!
HAVING TASTED FREEDOM--FULL GLORIOUS FREEDOM --HE WON'T BE CHAINED, WON'T BE BOUND, WON'T BE BURIED...
FIREHEART-- DON'T!
FIRE!
...EVER AGAIN!
RATATATATAT
ATATATAT
ATAT
FIREHEART!

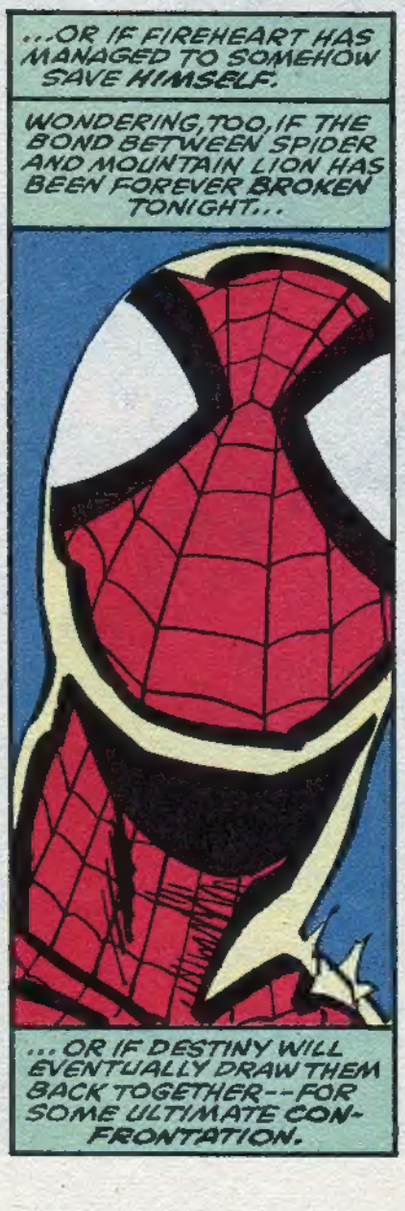


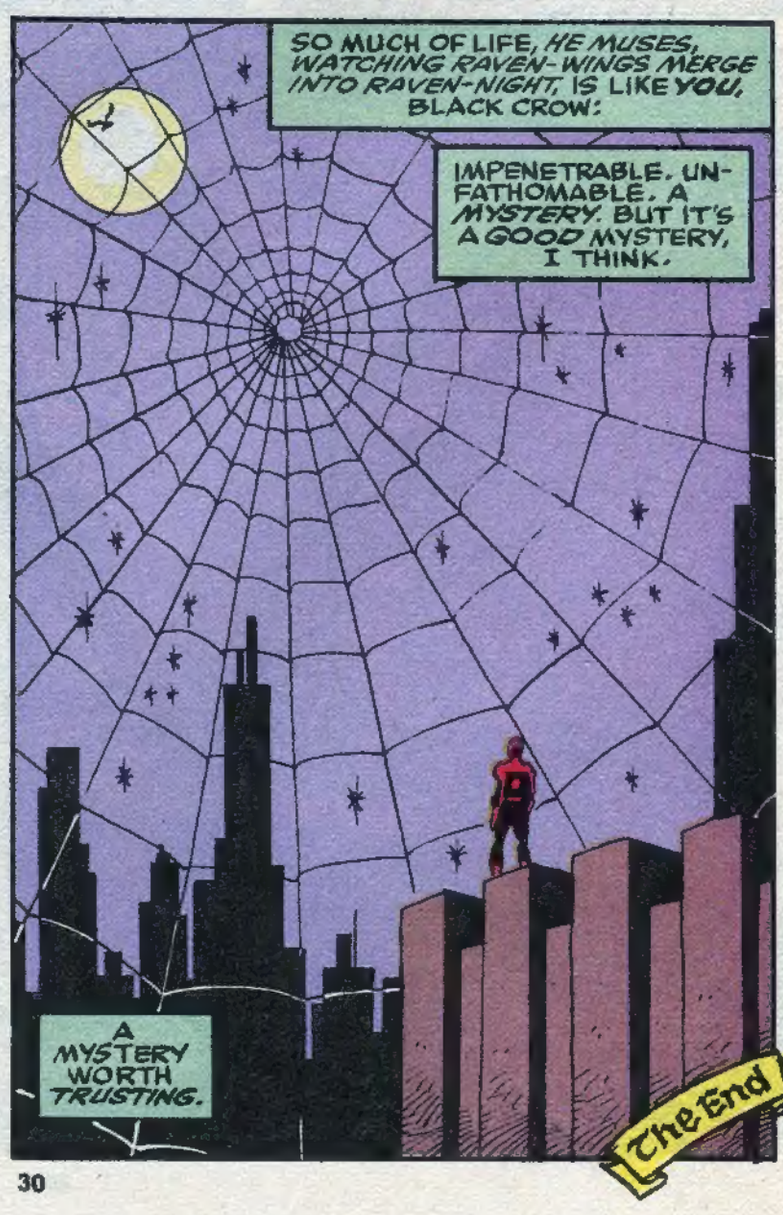


FIREHEART?

GONE. NO BROKEN BODY IN THE STREET. NO RETREATING SHADOW ON THE WALLS.

SPIDER-MAN GAZES HEAVENWARD, WONDERING IF BLACK CROW'S MAGIC HAS SPIRITED PUMA AWAY...


...OR IF FIREHEART HAS MANAGED TO SOMEHOW SAVE HIMSELF.
WONDERING, TOO, IF THE BOND BETWEEN SPIDER AND MOUNTAIN LION HAS BEEN FOREVER BROKEN TONIGHT...
...OR IF DESTINY WILL EVENTUALLY DRAW THEM BACK TOGETHER--FOR SOME ULTIMATE CONFRONTATION.


SO MUCH OF LIFE, HE MUSES, WATCHING RAVEN-WINGS MERGE INTO RAVEN-NIGHT, IS LIKE YOU, BLACK CROW:
IMPENETRABLE. UNFATHOMABLE. A MYSTERY. BUT IT'S A GOOD MYSTERY, I THINK.
A MYSTERY WORTH TRUSTING.
The End

SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAIL

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP
387 Park Avenue South
New York, New York 10016

DANNY FINGEROTH
EDITOR
MIKE LACKEY
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Attention correspondents: All letters considered for publication must include your name and address, though we will withhold that information upon request.

Dear SPEC,

SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN#185 was great--except for one thing--the Walrus. "The proportionate speed, strength, and agility of Walrus???" Come on, when you warned that it was a funny story nothing like this came to mind. Just out of curiosity, how fast and agile is the Walrus?

All in all, I loved the story. The art was wonderful, as usual, and the story was quite funny. It was nice to see the return of the Frogman, but don't bring him back anytime soon.

Well, until Spidey dons a frog suit, Make Mine Marvel!

Dennis Russell
4065 Debbidon Court
Memphis, TN 38108

How fast is a Walrus? Depends on who's chasing him, Dennis.

Dear Web-heads:

Wowzers! The Frogman and the Walrus back together again courtesy of J.M. DeMatteis!

Marc, I've been a big fan of your work from your early days at Marvel, (DEFENDERS, CAPTAIN AMERICA) through your monumental achievements at DC (*J.L.I., Dr. Fate*) and now back here again (MOON KNIGHT, SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN). With "The Child Within" saga, you have proven once more your expertise in writing a strong story that makes one think. Now, with issue #185, you've bared your other side: Humor, and what humor it is! From the triumphant (?) return of the Walrus to the "Gardner tie-in" on the news, to Spidey's embarrassment, you kept me laughing all the while.

Danny, when word got out that Marc was taking over the scripting chores, it was also said that the book would feature Sal Buscema's best work. I thought that his great stint on THOR would probably be the best Sal could do, yet to my delight, I see that this is truly Sal's best work!

Looking forward to the Vulture story!

Joe Kucharski, III
1116 Sycamore Street
Haddon Heights, NJ 08035

Everyone is in agreement--Sal just keeps topping himself, which is no easy task when your a man of Sal's accomplishments.

Dear Danny and Eric,

SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #185 ("Another Fine Mess!") was excellent and shows why J.M. DeMatteis is one of the best writers in the business. Very few writers are so apt at switching gears from disturbing, yet touching, tales like "The Child Within" to cornball humor like this without missing a beat.

There never was a more appropriate time, either. Considering that Spidey faces threats in five monthly titles, he probably needs a few laughs, or might soon be in danger of suffering a few "breakdowns."

My only regret is that J.M. couldn't get the Beetle to join the fun as characters with that name seem to be great to poke fun at.

In closing, I've followed Spidey for around 15 years now and consider Mr. DeMatteis to be the best SPIDER writer since Stan Lee, so try to keep him around for a long time. Thanks for your time.

Rob Schwartz
8 Kerr Ave.
Rochester, NY 14606

No, no, Rob, thank *you*! We'll see if we can dig up a Beetle or two for you next time. Okay?

Dear Spectacular Spider-Man,

Comments of mine while reading issue #185: "Hmm...heh,heh...tee hee... ho ho ho...hm? The Walrus and White Rabbit?!? Haha! Ha! Ha ha ha! (Snicker)...hee hee (I attempt to compose myself.) Heh..He hee...I can't stand it!!! The Walrus and the White Rabbit for cryin' out loud! Ha! Ha!, etc.

Seriously, thank you for a most enjoyable issue.

Incidentally, congratulations on your Spidey movie deal in the works. After all, Cameron is the best. Any news on it?

Make Mine Marvel!

Geoff Brown
5 Jasons Lane
North Scituate, MA 02066

Thanks for the "critique," Geoff. No new news on the Spidey movie deal, but in the movie business, no news is good news, most times!

Dear Marvel,

Being as I enjoyed Gerry Conway's latest run on SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN so much, I thought I'd wait a while before I commented on J.M. Dematteis's efforts on the title. So far, I'm impressed! The villains, Vermin and Green Goblin, were perfect. They were terrifying but because we are shown their backgrounds we care about their fates. We find they are people with troubles who aren't truly evil but deeply troubled. Because of the handling, they transcend the villain of the month and provide us with a story worth reading.

Willie R. Mellen
1861 Dieter Street
Maplewood, MN 55109

Guess ya liked it, Willie.

Dear Danny,

Just the other day I was talking about how certain comics have lost what it means to be fun without being utterly and tastelessly ridiculous. Then I read SSM #185. Now *this* was fun. The strange thing is, I want to see the fabulous Frog-man (men) again. Maybe after the next six or eight serious issues. Besides, even a Spider has to have fun!

Jon Johnson
64 Indian Hill Ave.
Portland, CT 06480

Wanting to see the return of a certain frog-like personage doesn't seem a bit strange to us, Jon.

Dear Spider/Frog People,

What's the point? WHAT'S THE POINT?! What's the point of only having two frogs in S.S.M. #185? If you had included the Toad, and maybe even Tim Boo Ba, then you would have had a real Frog-down! Hey, maybe even a whole amphibian multi-part series could come out of it! You could have Diamondback and the Man-thing rush to Spidey's aid (He's a frog, isn't he?!?) You could even throw in the Serpent Society, the Armadillo and Gigantis (the monster that walks like a man)! You could call it, the Secret Amphibian Wars Crisis"...or something! Imagine...only two frogs! I want more frogs! More pleasure! I must have--Uh, I think you get the point.

John Migliore
(Address withheld by request)

Nothing personal, John, but we can see why you've asked to have your address withheld...

Dear Danny and Eric,

I'm not sure if your Distinguished Competition has the rights to the term "Bwah-ha-ha", but I guess it was J.M. who coined it anyway, so there really is only one thing to say after SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #185. "BWAH-HA-HA right back atcha."

Thanks for the change of pace. I'm really looking forward to the Vulture 3-parter and the giant-sized anniversary ish, but for now...Bwah-ha-ha...and Rock 'n Roll.

Rol Hirst
England

Next: "The Death of Vermin!" Part One. A sensational follow-up to "The Child Within!" More Spidey history in-the-making. You'll want to be here for it.